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INDEX:

(1) Roundtable discussion on North Korea's nuclear test: Military analyst Ozu -- Did it succeed in downsizing warheads? University of Shizuoka Prof. Izumi -- US concerned over nuclear proliferation; University of Tokyo Prof. Shinichi Kitaoka -- A sanction resolution is not a panacea

(2) Shock waves from North Korea's nuclear test (Part 3): Technical innovation facilitates nuclear development

(3) Patriot missiles trucked into base despite local protest

(4) Interview with Atsushi Miura (48), author of "The Downwardly Mobile Society": Urges government to speed up efforts to take measures to counter widening social disparity with focus on young people

ARTICLES:

(1) Roundtable discussion on North Korea's nuclear test: Military analyst Ozu -- Did it succeed in downsizing warheads? University of Shizuoka Prof. Izumi -- US concerned over nuclear proliferation; University of Tokyo Prof. Shinichi Kitaoka -- A sanction resolution is not a panacea

YOMIURI (Page 11) (Full)
October 11, 2006

North Korea announced on Oct. 9 that it had "succeeded in setting

off a nuclear test," thereby sending shock waves across the world. This declaration has been taken as a grave threat not only to East Asia but also to the international community as whole. What was the North's intention in exploding a nuclear device? How should Japan and the world deal with this new development? The Yomiuri Shimbun invited three experts -- Hajime Izumi, a professor of politics at Shizuoka University who is an expert on the Korean Peninsula, Hajime Ozu, military analyst of military technology, and Shinichi Kitaoka, professor at University of Tokyo and formerly deputy permanent representative to the United Nations -- to discuss this new development.

Moderator: Kiichiro Harano, chief of the Yomiuri Shimbun International Desk.

-- What are your views about North Korea's announcement?

Kitaoka: North Korea launched missiles this July but failed to correctly read how the international community would respond. Contrary to (Pyongyang's expectations) that China and South Korea would persuade the US to lifting the financial sanctions now imposed on the North, Beijing and Seoul instead have found themselves in a difficult situation of having to provide assistance to the North. The North Koreans appear to be acting under their own rules of conduct.

Ozu: I felt very scared at the thought that Japan is indeed surrounded by nuclear powers. Until recently whether North Korea possesses nuclear arms had been just a question, but I now think it does indeed possess them, now that Pyongyang has declared it had conducted a nuclear test. Presumably, the North judged it was time to test the bombs. For scientists who failed to successfully test-launch (Taepodong-2 missiles in July), the nuclear test was a

TOKYO 00005988 002 OF 009

good opportunity to make up for the earlier failure. For the military, the time has become ripe to check the performance of their nuclear bombs.

-- What was the North Koreans' intention? Did they play their last diplomatic card?

Izumi: In terms of how to threaten the United States, this is not the last card. They can still threaten the US by saying, "If the US is unwilling to accept (the North's) request, we can transfer nuclear arms to a third country." And a much more powerful card than that would be to say they would mount nuclear warheads onto ballistic missiles that are capable of directly striking the US mainland. The North Koreans regard possessing nuclear weapons as a deterrent to the US, and they believe that enhancing their nuclear capability will help them to have an "upper hand" in negotiations (with the US).

Kitaoka: If the North's aim was to exercise influence on international politics, it was a miscalculation. Instead, it gave Japan a good opportunity to repair strained relations with China and South Korea. South Korean Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Ban Ki Moon is expected to take office as United Nations secretary general, and once he assumes the post he would take a neutral stand. The Roh Moo Hyun administration of South Korea, lenient with Pyongyang, then would be forced to be neutral. Presumably, the Kim Jong Il regime is destined to continue to demonstrate its strength at home.

-- What are your evaluations of North Korea's nuclear capability?

Ozu: Without help from other countries, the North would not be able to develop nuclear weapons. Based on technology obtained from the former Soviet Union and China, the North Koreans may be developing them in cooperation with Pakistan (a nuclear power). The relationship between the North and Pakistan is so close that they can exchange nuclear and missile technologies. I guess Iran (that is also developing nuclear weapons) should have been present on the scene of the nuclear test. North Korea's technical level is conjectured from what Pakistan and Iran are doing. It's absurd to think that the North exploded an atomic bomb like the one 60 years

ago. Some analysts commented that "the test was a failure" because the explosion was small in scale, but it is possible to say that they have produced small nuclear warheads.

Izumi: We must not make light of North Korea. It is incorrect to think that it is producing nuclear weapons single-handedly. We need to keep this in mind.

-- Do you think a second or third nuclear test will take place?

Ozu: I predicted that if North Korea were to set off a nuclear test, it would explode several bombs. Like India and Pakistan did. Technical experts want to test a number of things in exploding a nuclear bomb -- an atomic bomb, a hydrogen bomb, and a neutron bomb. Presumably technical experts would like to test a couple of bombs at once.

-- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is working to adopt a sanction resolution.

Kitaoka: A sanction resolution makes it easy for countries willing to impose sanctions to take such measures. But what will be

TOKYO 00005988 003 OF 009

implemented specifically is another story. Such a resolution is important as a manifestation of the will of the international community, but it is not a panacea. The US is serious about issuing it, but I have a feeling that not too many countries feel threatened by North Korea's nuclear weapons.

Izumi: The US is on its highest alert after the nuclear test. That's because of the matter of difference in reliability between before and after nuclear testing. It is only the US that is gravely concerned over the possibility that more reliable nuclear weapons will become available to terrorists, such as an international terrorist group Al Qaeda.

-- Are sanction measures useless?

Kitaoka: Economic sanctions will have some effect; they will eliminate such possibilities as a transfer of something dangerous to North Korea. The US has now put every option on the table. A military sanction will not come for now, but I can't say it will not definitely come.

Izumi: In order to prevent the transfer of nuclear weapons and technology to third countries, cooperation from China and Russia is necessary in view of transportation by land and that from Japan by sea. The US may have in mind the option of assassinating General Secretary Kim Jong Il or of toppling his regime, but it's unlikely

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to choose that option at this point. If Pyongyang said, "We'll return to the six-party talks unconditionally," the offer would be accepted. It is perfectly possible for the six-party talks to come back to the starting point of how to prevent North Korea from turning into a more dangerous country and persuade it to abandon its nuclear programs.

-- Have the six-party talks totally collapsed?

Izumi: For the North Koreans, the six-party talks are something like the last shelter. If they return to the talks when they feel insecure, they can delay talks on sanctions. This is a kind of diplomatic card for them.

-- Is it possible for them to return to the six-party talks?

Izumi: Well, what North Korea has insisted to date is that after signing a peace treaty to end (the truce) of the Korean War, it will denuclearize the Korean Peninsula. China and South Korea can share the view with the North Koreans that something like four-party talks among South and North Korea, the US, and China will be formed, and that the truce will be ended, replaced with a peace treaty. The Bush administration, too, since this summer has been considering re-launching the six-party talks and formally ending the Korean War.

Given this, it's no wonder that the North Koreans may become optimistic. They may think they won't have to abandon nuclear weapons for the time being.

-- The NPT system is being eroded.

Ozu: Why has the international community turned a blind eye to Pakistan and India? If it had not done so, I believe nuclear proliferation should have been more controllable.

Kitaoka: The US faces a number of diplomatic challenges. Nuclear nonproliferation is an important task, but it's impossible to deal with all issues only by that treaty. The NPT, in itself, is a

TOKYO 00005988 004 OF 009

typically unequal treaty. Nothing has been done when it comes to disarmament of the nuclear powers. North Korea walked out of the NPT, but India, Pakistan, and Israel have never acceded to the NPT. Their attitude is in a way reasonable.

-- There is a growing concern in the US and other countries over the domino effect that if North Korea possesses nuclear weapons, this would induce Japan and South Korea to opt for a nuclear arsenal. How do you think the security environment in East Asia will change?

Izumi: I don't think at all that the domino effect is imminent. If that were to occur, it would be when North Korea mounts nuclear warheads onto ballistic missiles that can put all of Japan under their range and directly threaten Japan. But at this point, it is unclear what kind of nuclear capability North Korea wants to have, what type of missiles it wants to have, and whether it wants to have missiles capable of reaching the US.

Kitaoka: It's not conceivable that North Korea will abandon nuclear weapons in return for something else. The security environment has been totally changed. I am paying close attention to how South Korea will respond. Since the start of the Roh Moo Hyun administration in South Korea, Japan and South Korea have been wide apart in perceptions of North Korea. The Roh administration firmly believes that North Korea will not invade South Korea since both countries are composed of the same Korean people. I wonder whether Seoul will change this stance and think, "This is a very serious matter and it is important for Japan, the US, and South Korea to act together." Until recently South Korea lashed out at Japan's words and barked up the wrong tree. This must be changed.

Japan's response being tested

-- How should Japan respond?

Izumi: Sanction measures, aside from their effectiveness, are necessary because they are an expression of how strongly Japan has felt the threat. I wonder what Japan will do if North Korea returns to the six-party talks in the future. How does Japan intend to make the Korean Peninsula nuclear free and stop the North Koreans from even more provocative acts? Japan must seriously consider a road map to engage North Korea properly in the international community, even seriously considering an option of paying good dividends to it. If China and South Korea, both of which have until now offered the North Koreans goods, turn around and put pressure on them, and if Japan and the US, both of which have until now pressured the North, offer carrots to it, the changes could have an impact.

Kitaoka: I'm skeptical about whether there are effective steps available. We must take every option into account.

Ozu: Japan's technology has been significantly exploited in North Korea. That country has imported a large number of Japanese-made cars, in which state-of-art parts are used. Anything brought out of Japan, whatever it may be, would help that country's military build-up. We must discuss actions to stem leakage of technology.

-- Do you think the "nuclear test" will help the survival of the Kim Jong Il regime?

Izumi: As Pyongyang has claimed, it might have increased its

deterrence capability vis-a-vis the US. But should China and South Korea, which until now have both sustained the Kim Jong Il regime,

TOKYO 00005988 005 OF 009

shifted their stances, the regime would suffer an economic blow that would shake it to the core. A more desirable scenario for the North would be for it to return to the six-party talks. It is unlikely for the time being that there will be a dramatic shift in China and South Korea's support for the North. North Korea has now been in an advantageous position in negotiations with the US as it is now regarded as a nuclear power.

-- Isn't General Secretary Kim Jong Il becoming frustrated?

Izumi: North Korea informed China in advance of its plan (for a nuclear test). Pyongyang has not reacted strongly to the first UNSC resolution condemning the North's declaration of a nuclear test. The North appears to be careful about its behavior, so I don't think Kim is frustrated.

Kitaoka: I think the test was successful in the short-term viewpoint. The Kim Jong Il regime has now been able to maintain its prestige at home. The test -- it depends on how neighbors will respond -- might have been seen as a real success if China and South Korea do not put full pressure on the North. It is Japan that will be most bothered by (North Korea's) nuclear armament. China and Russia, too, would not favor such a North Korea, but they may not reject it flatly. The case they definitely cannot accept is Japan becoming nuclear-armed in response to North Korea's nuclear arsenal. If Japan does not make any change to its previous policy, this would also be counted as a factor substantiating that the test was a success.

In addition, (the fate of North Korea) hinges on the US. We must co-exist with a North Korea armed with nuclear weapons at least for a short period of time. The US is the only country that can smash the North in the end. The question is whether the US is engaged in this case and what it will do while being engaged. How to have the North abandon nuclear weapons depends on how far the US will become involved in the matter.

Hajime Izumi: Born in Tokyo; is 56 years old; specializes in security affairs for Northeast Asia and political and foreign affairs on the Korean Peninsula; authors of such books as Posuto Reisen no Chosen Hanto (The Korean Peninsula in the post-cold war age).

Hajime Ozu: Born in Hiroshima Prefecture; is 64 years old; engaged in gathering missile information on other countries for 30 or more years and analyzing state-of-art technology; authors of such books as Shinban Misairu Jiten (New Missile Dictionary).

Shinichi Kitaoka: Born in Nara Prefecture; is 58 years old; served as deputy permanent representative to the UN in 2004-2006; authors of such books as Nihon no Jiritsu -- Taibei Kyocho to Ajia Gaiko (Independence of Japan -- Joint efforts with US and Asia diplomacy).

(2) Shock waves from North Korea's nuclear test (Part 3): Technical innovation facilitates nuclear development

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
October 13, 2006

In the United States, some observers now speculate that countries surrounding North Korea, such as Japan and South Korea, might decide to arm themselves with nuclear weapons.

TOKYO 00005988 006 OF 009

Half a day after North Korea conducted a nuclear test (on Oct. 9), President Bush issued an emergency statement that purposely referred to the US "nuclear umbrella" over Japan and China. The statement noted: "The US has reaffirmed with its allies, including South Korea

and Japan, that it will fulfill its duties to ensure deterrence and security."

The governments of Japan and the US conducted a coordination of views on the contents of the statement on the assumption that North Korea would forge ahead with a nuclear test. A foreign affairs source said, "In addition to the purpose of demonstrating our deterrence capability to North Korea, there was also the aim of nipping in the bud the concept of Japan's opting for nuclear arms that was then floating in Japan and the US."

On Oct. 5, after North Korea announced (on Oct. 3) that it would conduct a nuclear test, US Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said, "Should North Korea possess nuclear weapons, other countries with production capability might go nuclear." These statements represent a strong sense of alarm in the US government about the domino effect of North Korea's nuclear test.

The emergence in the US of the notion of Japan's going nuclear is intended, in a sense, as a means to urge China to make efforts to dissuade North Korea from nuclear testing. The US government fears that the nuclear weapons possessed by North Korea would be transferred to terrorists or third countries. Rumsfeld commented, "The current world is different from that in the US-Soviet Union Cold-War era, in which the principle of nuclear deterrence was properly functioning."

In the Middle East, where the "nuclear umbrella" of the US does not reach, the situation is serious.

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (Geneva) Director Lewis said, "Once Iran arms itself with nuclear weapons, the nuclear domino phenomenon might begin to take on a realistic touch."

Professor Boen (TN: phonetic) at King's College London cited Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, and Syria as countries interested in developing nuclear weapons.

"Saudi Arabia is approaching Pakistan, the solo nuclear power in the Islamic zone." This kind of information has spread in the Arab world over the past several years. Saudi Arabian Prince Abdallah (now king) and other prominent figures visited Pakistan to have a first look at nuclear facilities there. There are also rumors that they contacted Dr. Khan, who regarded as the founder of Pakistan's nuclear weapons development program.

Khan, who had taken the lead in operating the "nuclear black market," has been under house arrest since February 2004. Despite such a situation, the British intelligence agency MI-5 announced last year that about 360 corporations and government agencies in Pakistan and Iran, which once received missiles from North Korea, have traded materials compatible to nuclear weapons, disclosing that the "black market" still exists.

According to a declassified document of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the US started in the 1960s keeping tabs on nuclear activities by Western countries, such as Switzerland, out of fear

TOKYO 00005988 007 OF 009

that the nuclear domino phenomenon could spread further. In the 1960s, Britain, France, and China armed themselves with nuclear weapons, following the US and the Soviet Union. These countries' attempts were blocked by the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which came into effect in 1970, and the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

A source connected to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) pointed out that the hurdle to nuclear development has lowered due to the ongoing technical innovation, saying, "It is now possible for even mid-developed countries to develop nuclear weapons if they want."

North Korea's nuclear test is a threat not only for Northeast Asia. We must explore fresh measures to prevent nuclear proliferation.

Toshihiko Kasahara and Masaya Oikawa in Washington, Haruyuki Aikawa in Vienna, Shoji Nishioka in Beijing, and Takahiro Hirata in the political section were in charge of this series.

(3) Patriot missiles trucked into base despite local protest

AKAHATA (Page 15) (Full)
October 12, 2006

Amid the angry outcries of local residents, the US military yesterday convoyed Patriot Advanced Capability 3 (PAC-3) ground-to-air guided missiles from its Tengan pier in Uruma City, Okinawa Prefecture, to the Kadena ammunition depot.

At around 9:30 a.m., a convoy of more than 10 trailers departed from the Tengan pier. On their windshields were English stickers reading "EXPLOSIVES." The imposing convoy ran down a road that is used by local communities with houses and stores standing on both sides. The missile-carrying trailers entered the Kadena ammunition depot through its gate.

Labor union and civic group members protesting the trucking of missiles stood in front of the gate to the pier but they were pushed back by about 150 riot policemen mobilized at the US military's request.

On the morning of Oct. 9, a transport ship with the missiles on board was berthed alongside the Tengan pier. However, the mayors of Kadena Town, Okinawa City, and Chatan Town -- which surround Kadena Air Base, where the missiles are to be deployed -- had expressed their opposition to the deployment of Patriot missiles. On Oct. 10, the mayor of Uruma City also requested the Defense Facilities Administration Agency's local bureau in Naha City not to unload the missiles. The missiles were not unloaded for two days due in part to local protests.

The Tengan pier is located in the Konbu block of former Gushikawa City. In 1969, when the US military was aiming to extend the Tengan pier, Emi Kise, a 67-year-old local resident living near the pier, participated in a struggle of local communities. The local struggle prevented the US military from requisitioning land.

"My parents were killed in the war," Kise recalled. She added: "I know the fearfulness and folly of war. That's why I can never allow the deployment of missiles. I want everybody to stand up like before, and I want to see the missiles and bases removed from Okinawa."

TOKYO 00005988 008 OF 009

(4) Interview with Atsushi Miura (48), author of "The Downwardly Mobile Society": Urges government to speed up efforts to take measures to counter widening social disparity with focus on young people

YOMIURI (Page 9) (Full)
October 11, 2006

-- Some say that the disparities among individuals are widening. What do you think is the reason for that?

"Since the government has cut taxes on people in the higher income brackets through the relaxation of progressive taxation of individual incomes for the past two decades, rich people have become even richer, widening the income gaps. In this sense, it is not right to say that the Koizumi administration is the principal culprit for the expanded income gaps. However, the administration did not do anything about it, even after the growing income disparities were recognized as an issue. In my view, it should have discussed the issue."

-- The Abe administration plans to implement a second-chance policy aimed at preventing social or income disparity from becoming a fixed trend.

"I give high marks to the Abe administration's policy focusing on

young people. Experts say that 60% of the disparity is ascribable to the increase in the number of the elderly. However, the reason why my book Karyuu Shakai or "Downwardly Mobile Society" made the best seller lists is not because elderly people bought it but because young people are reading it."

-- Why do you think the government should focus its policy on young people?

"It is only natural that income disparity among salaried workers in the same generation grows as the workers reach their retirement age. That is not particularly a problem. Japan's measures to deal with the elderly population are not so bad, compared with those in other countries. However, our country is behind European countries in terms of employment of young people. In Europe, employing young people has been an issue for at least the last three decades. Vocational training to prevent an increase in the number of so-called freeters (job-hopping part-time workers) is an insufficient measure.

"Many young people up to age of 30 earn 10 million yen a year on average. On the other hand, freeters tend to earn less than 1 million yen. Compared with the situation 20 to 30 years ago, income disparity among 30-year olds has apparently widened. The gaps will become even wider in 10 to 15 years' time. Young people will become demoralized once they realize how wide the income gap is. That is why countermeasures targeting young people are advisable."

-- How should the disparities be corrected?

"We cannot discuss the so-called parasite singles, people who are unmarried and financially looked after by their parents, and married persons with two children on the same plane.

"It is necessary to immediately take income-support measures for those who have a family and are in trouble because their companies

TOKYO 00005988 009 OF 009

went bankrupt or their jobs were made redundant. However, measures for parasite-singles or freeters can wait a little longer. It is important to create opportunities for those who want to work as permanent employees with a good level of income to be able to achieve such a goal, so that they can look to a future of steady increases in income."

-- Your book calls for preferentially treating people in the lower income bracket in terms of education.

"People who cannot afford to pay tuition fees for cram schools should also be given the opportunity for a good education. I hear some high school students do not know the multiplication tables or cannot even write simple Japanese hiragana. Jobs available to such people are limited. It is necessary to raise the level of education at public elementary and middle schools by augmenting the educational budget. One way of doing so would be to have highly-qualified cram school instructors teach at poorly performing schools for a year, their salaries subsidized by the government. Unless the difference in opportunities for a good education is corrected, social disparity as an issue will be passed along to future generations. Should that occur, the trend will take root and be reproduced."

-- Prime Minister Abe's policy pledge is to cut the number of freeters by 20% .

"As the economy picks up, companies are employing more people. As such, the number of freeters will drop over time by about 20% . The prime minister should aim for a 50% cut. Starting in four years, 2010, the baby-boomer generation will be retiring en masse. This would be a good opportunity for freeters to become permanent employees.

"The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) did well in Tokyo and Osaka in last year's Lower House election. This is presumably because young people voted for the LDP out of expectation that the party would correct the growing disparity. The Abe administration's second chance

policy is based on an analysis of this election. If the administration fails to live up to expectations of young people, support for the LDP will drop in the Upper House election next year."

Atsushi Miura: Established the Cultural Studies Research Center in 1999, after working as the editor in chief of Parco's marketing magazine and a researcher at the Mitsubishi Research Center. He has focused his research on family, consumption and urban issues. "Downwardly Mobile Society," published in 2005, is still on the bestseller lists. The work focuses on the growing social disparity.

SCHIEFFER